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BAD MORAL EFFECT

Of Unwise Use of the Pardoning Power.

Tampa News:—A pardoning system which permits the granting of freedom to a convicted criminal against the wishes of the judge, prosecuting attorneys, the jurors who convicted him and the people at large, is a dangerous system and one that the people of Florida should not tolerate.

Live Oak Democrat: The seemingly reckless pardoning of convicted criminals, in other sections of the country as well as Florida, is arousing some thought and attention—and, indeed, it should. We dislike to indulge in fault finding or pronounce an unjust criticism on any of our public officials, but "when there is so much smoke there is likely to be some fire," and it is well to at least pause for reflection. The—sometimes wholesale—pardoning of criminals who have been justly sentenced by due process of law, is sure to react in making criminals more bold in violation, thinking if captured, they can soon be released through a lenient board of pardons; and besides this, it will have the effect of weakening the efficiency of criminal prosecution, through discouragement, by destroying the results of its service before its good purposes have been accomplished. District Attorney Hamlin, of Colorado, makes the following very wise statement of his faith on this question, which would be well for all concerned to consider: "I believe in justice at all times, and insist that every person accused of a crime should have an absolutely fair trial, and then if he or she is convicted and sentenced, no pardon should be issued, except for the very best of reasons. Crime is rampant enough in this country without increasing it by the too frequent exercise of the pardoning power on the part of executives."

Times Union:—The Monticello News says it never took much stock in the wholesale denunciation of the state board of pardons until it was brought home to that paper by the recent pardon of a negro on whose case the governor was urgently requested to delay action until several citizens of Monticello could appear before the board and make protest. The requests were unheeded and now the News says: "It is evident that the present administration is bent on turning loose criminals convicted in the state courts." A list of all the convicted criminals turned loose on society by the present board of pardons would make interesting reading.

Gen. E. M. Law, editor of the Bartow Courier-Informant, is one of the calmest, coolest, most conservative writers in the State. It may, therefore, be understood how severe is his language when, in discussing the recent pardoning of Harry Bomford, of Tampa, for the attempted murder of Capt. Charley Parks in the latter's home, Gen. Law says: "The action of the pardoning board in this case is a disgrace to the state and an insult to every honorable man and virtuous woman in it."

If people believe that murderers cannot or will not be punished

by "due process of law," it is quite likely that they will take the law into their own hands and resort to lynching. Now, the point is, if the people so believe, who is responsible for causing them to so believe? Is it THE HERALD, which cries aloud for the enforcement of the laws and the execution of the judgments of the courts? or is it the pardoning board, which sets aside the verdicts of juries and the judgments of the highest court in the State? Which is doing most to provoke lynch law, THE HERALD, or the pardoning board? Why should THE HERALD be denounced as blood-thirsty, when the penalties are prescribed by the laws and not by the paper?

We do not remember that THE HERALD has ever charged the State pardoning board with being influenced by improper or unworthy motives; at any rate, we give the board credit for honesty and integrity. We hold that the board is often deceived and imposed upon, and almost any other group of five men would be equally susceptible to deceit by parties applying for pardon. It would probably be wise to abolish the board as a pardoning tribunal and confer its powers upon the governor and make him solely responsible. At all events, something should be done to check the wholesale granting of pardons, which unquestionably has the effect of causing some people to consider lynching as more efficacious than "due process of law."

Who May Run or Vote.

The campaign committee of the Democratic party in Florida issued the official call for the primaries for May 19th and June 16th, and thus defined the qualifications of candidates and electors:

"Those, and only those persons, shall be permitted to become candidates before or to vote at or participate in the management of any primary election held by the Democratic party in Florida, who are white Democratic electors, who declare their adherence to the principles and organization of the Democratic party—national, state and county—who are by the laws of the State lawful electors of the district in which they offer to vote, who have paid their poll taxes legally due not less than ten days before such primary election held, and who shall when challenged by an elector pledge in writing upon oath before an inspector his honor to abide by and support the result of such primary and vote for the nominee thereof."

Tampa Times:—Reports are universal to the fact that the orange bloom all over South Florida is the largest on record per tree. The number of trees has been of course much reduced since the period prior to the great freeze, but the crop now promises to be as large in the southern counties as it was in the palmy days. It is perhaps early to discuss the matter, but it may not be amiss to state that it will be profitable to give the most careful attention to cultivation and marketing the coming crop. And also that, when it is ripened, it should be packed with the utmost care and pains. There is money in sending fruit to market in the best condition, carefully packed and selected, with a view to uniformity in color and quality.

COUNTY MASS MEETING

To be Held at Wauchula, Saturday, March 21.

All who favor good government, lower taxes, good roads, and county division, are requested and expected to meet at Wauchula on Saturday, March 21., for the purpose of nominating a candidate for Representative and endorsing such men for officers as they desire and other such business as may come before the people in the coming election. Every voter and taxpayer is urged to be present at this important meeting and take part in the same; and if you cannot come, send a delegate, as we not only want every district, but every individual in the county to have a voice in this meeting, so that there will be no cause for complaint and all abide by the will of the majority if honestly and fairly expressed. Remember the time and place and attend this meeting. We want every district in the county, no matter how small, to be represented at this important meeting of the people of this county. You will be entertained by speeches from the most able and eloquent men in the State, and we urge you to be present and take part.

THE COMMITTEE.

Hon. W. B. Lamar's Visit.

Hon. W. B. Lamar, congressman from the third district and candidate for United States senator, arrived here on the morning train from Fort Myers, Tuesday. He was accompanied by Mrs. Lamar and his brother, H. M. J. M. Lamar. They were met at the depot by friends and taken to Hotel Dade, where, subsequently, they dined.

The two gentlemen spent the hours from 8 till 11 a. m. mingling with our people and getting acquainted. While they were thus engaged, a number of Punta Gorda ladies called on Mrs. Lamar at the hotel and were captivated by her. Indeed, while coming up from the depot and later, in the city hall, Mrs. Lamar met and shook hands with many voters, all of whom were charmed by her winsome manners.

At 11 o'clock, the city hall was filled with ladies and gentlemen assembled to hear Mr. Lamar present his claims for the senatorship. He was introduced by C. J. F. A. Whitney, president of the board of trade, who explained that what our people most want is the improvement of this harbor.

Mr. Lamar opened his speech by promising that, if elected, he would do his best to secure the fulfillment of our wishes. And his promise was made in such a manner as convinced his hearers of his sincerity and of his ability to serve them.

The subject of water transportation, improved shipping facilities, gave him a starter on the chief topic of his speech, which was in effect the oppression of the people by high freight and passenger rates caused by the over-capitalization of railroads. The limitations of this paper prevent giving even a synopsis of his remarks, and it must suffice to say that they were convincing to his hearers,

who gave him close attention during the hour that he spoke. He did not go into the details of his public record, nor did he allude to his successful efforts as attorney-general to collect \$96,000 of back taxes from the old F. C. and P. railroad, now a part of the Seaboard system, nor did he mention his notable conduct in congress in the impeachment of United States Judge Swayne. But most of his hearers are familiar with these things. He made no reflections upon his competitors in the senatorial race. His speech was delivered in a calm, dispassionate manner and created a very favorable impression.

Should he win the honor to which he aspires, our people feel that their interests will be well looked after.

The Lamars left on the evening train for Arcadia, where they spent Tuesday night and where Mr. Lamar addressed the people yesterday. On Saturday, he and Mrs. Lamar will return to Washington. They promised to come here again before summer and our people hope they will be able to do so.

We hear much of the "machine" in Florida politics, but we have never been able to locate it.—Pensacola Journal.—Another dear little lamb. Some newspapers are really too unsophisticated for this wicked, sordid world of ours. No "machine politics in Florida!" Doesn't the innocence of the suggestion freeze you?—Ocala Banner.

Public Library Started.

On April 1st, there will be opened for the people of Punta Gorda a Public library domiciled at the Guild room in the Rectory of the Episcopal church. The traveling Library of the Church Periodical Club in New York has given as a starter of 62 volumes of standard fiction, and other contributions of books are asked for. The library will be open all day, every day including Sunday, and each evening till 8 o'clock.

Contributions of money or books may be made to Mrs. Theo. Q. Trout, librarian, or Dr. G. H. Perine, and same is respectfully solicited. Books may be had for reading free of charge, and retained for 2 weeks, and may be retained 2 weeks longer on application, but a fine of one cent a day will be assessed on all borrowers failing to report at the time specified.

The library will be supplied with benches, chairs and writing table, though no stationery will be supplied without a nominal charge.—Stamps may be had of the librarian. The lighting used will be from the lamps formerly used in the Episcopal church and the cost of oil and janitor will be defrayed by voluntary contributions.

All donations will be acknowledged through THE HERALD, unless otherwise instructed.

Times-Union:—The Tampa Northern, which had only five miles of road a year ago, now has more than fifty miles built and in use. The company is now buying the right of way between Brooksville and Dunnellon, and a corps of engineers is running the line north of the latter city. The road will eventually connect with one running directly to Chicago and will run a line to the Alabama coal fields.

AN OPEN LETTER

To the Candidate for Governor at the Coming Primaries.

As there are to be no party conventions, and consequently no party platforms, it seems to be the fashion of the times for each candidate to make and publish his own platform, and that is the only method the opponents of the liquor traffic have of finding out what the candidates will or will not do on certain lines of legislation to be brought before the coming legislature.

Mr. Stockton and Mr. Browne have declared in favor of prohibition, and Gen. Gilchrist has declared that he drinks but rarely, that he voted some twelve or fifteen years ago for local option, and that with a Constitutional Amendment he has nothing to do, as that is wholly with the Legislature and the People.

Now, none of these planks is very definite, and the Anti-Saloon people of the State would like to have the candidates for Governor tell them through the public press what, if elected Governor, each will do in the following cases:

Will you as Governor advise the Legislature to submit a constitutional Amendment to a vote of the people, or will you advise against it, or ignore it?

Will you as such Governor advise the Legislature to pass a general prohibitory law, or will you advise against, or ignore it? Or, if passed, will you approve it, or veto it?

Will you, as such Governor, advise the Legislature to enact a law to prevent the railroads and express companies from transporting intoxicating liquors into dry counties, or will you advise against it, or ignore it? Or, if enacted, will you approve it, or veto it?

Will you, as such Governor, advise the Legislature to enact a law to remove from office all Judicial and Executive officers who shall willfully neglect or refuse to execute the laws of the State, including all laws against the traffic in intoxicating liquors, or will you advise against it, or ignore it? Or, if enacted, will you approve, or veto it?

These are all absolutely important and necessary legislation, and the Anti-Saloon people do not want to cast their votes in the dark, or on an uncertainty.

JOHN C. PEPPER.

Punta Gorda, Fla.

DeLand Record:—Messrs James W. Perkins and Zack T. Bielby are two orange-growers of this section who made a nice sum from the crop just disposed of, the former cleaning up \$8,500 and the latter \$6,500. Their groves are out north of town about five miles, and are kept in the best of condition. They will have a larger crop another season, as these groves, like all others, are showing signs of heavy bloom.

C. R. C. Johnson of Orlando has just begun to cut his celery crop. From one small piece, which was accurately measured and found to contain just one-tenth of an acre, he cut 148 crates of extra fine celery which he disposed of at \$2 per crate f. o. b. Sanford. This would make an income of \$2,960 per acre.